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SPOTLIGHTING THE PLIGHT OF AFRICA'S ELEPHANTS



NEWS

Govt set to amend Wildlife Act to protect whistleblowers (Zimbabwe)

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By VENERANDA LANGA – News Day



PARLIAMENT has recommended amendments to the Wildlife Act to provide protection for whistleblowers and ensure stiff penalties for those found in possession of cyanide, a dangerous chemical often used by poachers to poison elephants.

In its recent report on elephant management in Hwange and Gonarezhou National Parks, the Environment Parliamentary Portfolio Committee said: “The Ministry of Environment should, by December 2021, amend the Parks and Wildlife Act to provide for the protection of whistleblowers and the rewarding system and incorporate deterrent custodial sentences.

“For instance, illegal cyanide possession does not have a deterrent sentence.



“It was the committee’s observation that to have a future, elephants must have a shared value between ZimParks and the communities surrounding national parks because the greater the value, the greater the tolerance of animals.”

Zimbabwe has an estimated elephant population of 84 000, with around 53 991 of the jumbos in the Hwange Zambezi Cluster.

A total of 115 elephants were killed by cyanide poisoning between 2013 and 2014. Although there has been a gradual decrease in cyanide poisoning of elephants, wildlife conservationists have expressed concern over the use of the dangerous chemical on wild animals.

The committee said government should come up with programmes that enable communities in wildlife areas to benefit from the animals so that they see the need to contribute towards combating poaching.

